



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## GEORGE ROGERS CLARK'S SERVICE OF SUPPLY <sup>1</sup>

In any study of the western struggle during the revolution one is impressed with a peculiar sense of contrast. If one thinks of the casual way in which the expedition into the northwest began, of the meagre forces involved, of the insignificance of the engagements — if the surrender of small garrisons to a few companies of backwoodsmen could be called engagements — or if one thinks of the slight attention which the eastern leaders of the revolution bestowed upon these remote westerners, the impression is something like that made by an actor who steps upon the stage in a minor role, and retires after speaking a few unimportant lines. If, however, one reflects upon the stakes for which the game was played, the international bearings of the struggle, and the consequences of the backwoodsmen's victory, the conflict takes on the dimensions of a considerable episode in the drama of world politics. To the historian the struggle presents a complexity of factors. Anyone who adequately treats the operations in the "Illinois country" must bring within the range of his researches the interplay of diplomacy and force which characterized the British occupation, the shortsighted neglect of a feeble continental congress, the administrative helplessness of a Virginian governor and council, the friendly neutrality and later the active support of the Spanish colonial forces, the wavering attitude of bewildered French inhabitants tossed about in the struggle for empire, the capable but self-

<sup>1</sup> This paper was read at the fourteenth annual meeting of the Mississippi valley historical association in Madison, April 15, 1921.

In the preparation of this paper, the author has found the assistance of various friends most helpful. Professor J. A. James, of Northwestern university, whose edition of the Clark papers served as the author's most useful guide, offered many valuable criticisms upon the first draft of his manuscript, and Dr. H. J. Eckenrode of Richmond, Virginia, gave substantial aid (including numerous detailed suggestions) in connection with Virginia's relation to the Clark scheme. The author is also indebted to Mr. M. P. Robinson, state archivist of Virginia, Mr. E. G. Swem, librarian of William and Mary college, and Dr. H. R. McIlwaine, state librarian of Virginia. These men facilitated his searches among the unpublished Clark records at Richmond. To Miss Louise P. Kellog he is indebted for assistance in the examination of original material at Madison.

centered conduct of strenuous American pioneers, and, not least in importance, the behavior of the Indians, whose friendship must be sought but whose treacherous hostility was a constant menace.

It is only a modest task, however, which this paper contemplates — that of presenting a close-up view of some of the every day problems of the man who was at once the originator and the supreme leader of this pioneer adventure. The military features of George Rogers Clark's campaigns have been often discussed. But what about the daily administrative problems which he faced in procuring, transporting, preserving, and distributing the provisions and equipment which his undertaking required? Because of the primitive conditions involved, this subject seems, to the writer at least, to offer some points of special interest.

In moving against Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes in 1778-1779, and in his larger project for attacking Detroit, General Clark was acting primarily for Virginia, whose commission he bore. The energies of the old dominion, however, were fully absorbed — overstrained, in fact — in the more vital operations in the eastern campaigns, and Clark was of necessity thrown upon his own resources.<sup>2</sup>

The problem of food supply was perhaps the most imperative

<sup>2</sup> Western writers usually approach the problem of Virginia's relation to the Clark campaigns from the wrong angle. Forgetting the difficulties under which Virginia labored, they uniformly blame the state authorities for not giving Clark greater assistance. The heavy burden of the war resting upon Virginia, especially from 1776 to 1780, should not be overlooked. Enormous quantities of arms and provisions were shipped to Washington's army, leaving little for the state to devote to a private enterprise such as Clark's. Even assuming that the supplies had been available, the transportation difficulties were very formidable. The only practical route was the Ohio river, and the danger of Indian attack would have placed the boats under heavy hazards, to mention only one of the problems involved in maintaining such a line of supply transportation. Though Clark's men were without clothing, it is also true that Virginia's state troops and militiamen were in rags. Clark's financial difficulties were no greater than those of the state authorities themselves. Specie was so scarce and the depreciation of paper money so serious that the government had to be subsisted and the army supplied by requisitioning and by tithes on foodstuffs and tobacco. Clerks were partly paid in necessities of life, and at one time it seemed that the Virginian government would have to cease functioning from sheer poverty. During the latter part of the war the state treasury was practically bankrupt. In spite of all this, however, toward the close of the struggle the Virginian government did make substantial efforts to supply

of all. Troops had to be maintained while on the march through wild country, and men in the garrisons of the frontier posts had to be subsisted during long periods of inactivity. More than once the food shortage became acute. The account in Bowman's journal of the ever-famous march upon Vincennes in February, 1779, makes frequent mention of the lack of food, and Clark himself refers to his men as half-starved and says he would have given a great deal for a day's provisions. The men at the falls of the Ohio were more than once reported to be in a starving condition, and Fort Jefferson had to be evacuated in 1781 because no supplies were available.

In the matter of food alone, Clark's needs included, as an irreducible minimum, bread, meat, and drink for the men, and fodder for the horses. The drink was usually of the stronger sort, such as whisky, rum, or taffia (a kind of rum obtained in the West Indies), all of which were invariably entered as "necessaries." For bread, reliance was placed upon wheat flour and corn, or as it was sometimes called, "Indian meal." The meat was of a rather varied character, obtained in part from the inhabitants, and in part by hunting. Hunting forays were a regular part of the routine, the larger game consisting usually of deer, elks, buffaloes, bears, and wild hogs. After the nimrods had bagged their game, its safe transportation and preservation presented no small problem. Often their luck was bad, as for instance when a party of nine hunters who were bringing home in a boat the fruits of a winter's hunt were struck by a gale which sent to the bottom the whole precious cargo, consisting of fifty-four buffaloes, four elks, and two wild hogs.<sup>3</sup> If

Clark. William Davis of the Virginia war office wrote to Clark, April 6, 1782, saying that he had procured "2 light brass three-pounders, 150 coats, 100 pair overalls, 200 shirts, about the same number of stockings, and a parcel of hats." Many of the articles were to be collected on the road from Richmond to Redstone near Pittsburgh. Clark manuscripts, in the possession of the Wisconsin historical society (Draper manuscripts, J), 52: 12. When all the factors involved are duly weighed, the wonder will be that Virginia was able to extend any aid at all. See *Calendar of Virginia state papers*, 1781, *passim*; Hamilton J. Eckenrode, *The revolution in Virginia* (Boston and New York, 1916); F. Z. Ripley, *The financial history of Virginia* (Columbia university studies in history, economics, and public law, volume 4, no. 1). The above details and comments were kindly contributed by Dr. H. J. Eckenrode of Richmond.

<sup>3</sup> *George Rogers Clark papers*, edited by James A. James (*Illinois historical collections*, volume 8), 533. See also pp. 506, 528, 532.

the supply of barrels failed, or if salt was lacking, or if the chief pickler was captured by Indians, the meat obtained at so great sacrifice was left to spoil. As the commissary preferred that the fighting morale of the men should be confined to the enemy, he learned from bitter experience to refrain from serving doubtful meat, even though large supplies of whisky were usually at hand for washing it down.

The problem of salt was indeed a serious one. Without salt, hunters would not be sent out, and on one occasion the lack of this article caused two-thirds of the men at Vincennes to be "incapable of duty."<sup>4</sup> Taking it all in all, Clark's food problem was a veritable struggle for existence.

In materials other than food, Clark's needs were by no means simple. He required boats of various types, large quantities of tar, pitch, and oakum, powder for hunting and for supplying the Indians as well as for fighting, cannon, swivels, rifles, pistols, knives, wagons, horses, paint, blankets, cordage, tobacco, liquor, furniture, seeds, material for forts, and numerous other necessities. The varied nature of Clark's commissary demands is well shown in a study of his itemized disbursements. Selecting the items at random we find the following: \$237 for ten men for bringing boats from Wheeling to Redstone; \$10 for four pair handcuffs; \$237 for ten beeves; \$340 for 142 pounds gunpowder; \$36 for storage and cartage of merchandise at Missere in the Spanish country; \$59.20 to an armorer for 37 days' work; \$30 for a boat anchor; \$10 for ferriages over the Mississippi; \$224 for 56 gallons of taffia delivered to Indians at sundry councils and treaties; \$3.40 for one-half gallon rum for fatigue party loading boats; \$20 for sundry necessities for the hospital; \$9 for two men for three days' search after public horses; \$76.60 to Charles Caderon for provisions and other necessities furnished Captain Bowman's company on their march to Illinois. There are many other items of this sort, and among them we find mention of materials unfamiliar to the frontier, such as "linen for boat covers," "flags for Indians," and "a large copper kettle."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 370.

<sup>5</sup> A considerable mass of Clark papers, long buried among the obsolete records of the Virginia state auditor, has been recovered through the efforts of Mr. E. G. Swem, formerly assistant state librarian, and these papers are now to be found, flat-

As to clothing Clark's resources were scant. Thomas Jefferson understated the case when he instructed Clark that the supply of clothing from Virginia would be "precarious," and advised him to provide the clothes in his own quarter "as far as skins would enable [him] to do it."<sup>6</sup> The men under Clark, like those under Washington at Valley Forge, were often barefoot, and at times almost naked.<sup>7</sup>

Pa er, sorely needed for administrative records as well as for important correspondence, was hard to find, and was obtainable only at a high price. Some of the irregular shreds found in the Clark papers now preserved at Richmond resemble bits of wood pulp rather than real paper. Often the paper is so brown and the ink so poor that the writing is illegible.

The industrial operations incidental to Clark's campaigns called for a variety of material. These operations included boat-making, building of cannon carriages, construction of block houses and dwellings, repairing of guns, and other enterprises involving real craftsmanship and technical skill. An abstract of the work done by artificers at Fort Jefferson in 1780-1781 includes construction work on a garrison, covering two bastions, making three gates, erecting three store houses and five dwellings, building three block houses, putting up a number of huts for the soldiery, preparing a carriage for a six-pounder, fashioning 176 oars, and making 38 coffins for those of the little band who had died within the year. The blacksmith who kept the "public smith house" at the falls of the Ohio was a busy man if we may judge by the large number of orders upon him for making nails, repairing rifles, supplying axes, hardening the steel in guns, and mending saddles.<sup>8</sup> For all this construction and manufacture a varied equipment was required.

It should be remembered that the demands upon Clark were filed in about sixty boxes, in the Virginia state archives at Richmond. They include routine commissary orders, vouchers, provision returns, letters, books of account, and a variety of memoranda. An examination of this material affords an intimate view of Clark's administrative problems. For an itemized statement of Clark's disbursements, see *House reports*, 30 congress, 1 session, no. 216.

<sup>6</sup> Jefferson to Clark, January 29, 1780, in *Clark papers* (James, ed.), 389.

<sup>7</sup> In a letter dated at Fort Nelson, August 5, 1782, Clark referred to distress among his officers for want of clothing. Clark papers, in Virginia state archives, "Aud. 53."

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, "Aud. 44," "Aud. 42."

not confined to the support of his troops. Widows and others in distress were provided for, and, in addition, gifts and supplies had to be constantly furnished to the Indians, whose good will Clark was careful to cultivate. To prepare for an Indian council meant to assemble many gallons of "taffia," whisky, or other strong drink, and to accumulate ample stores of tobacco, vermilion, tape, ribbon, linen, blankets, leggings, and such things. Among the commissary and quartermaster's orders one finds frequent mention of items furnished to the Kickapoo, Piankashaw, Ottawa, Potawatami, and other of the Illinois tribes, all fantastically misspelled in the most approved backwoods fashion. In many cases the goods furnished to individual Indians were in payment for services, while in other cases they were in the nature of gifts. An essential part of Clark's personnel was a goodly number of Indian agents and Indian interpreters.<sup>9</sup>

To meet all these material demands in an unsettled frontier country, in the absence of adequate governmental support, with little or no money, and in the face of British intrigue, was a task that called for the highest statesmanship and involved an exacting amount of administrative and clerical work. When Clark left Williamsburg in January, 1778, after his preliminary conference with Governor Patrick Henry and the Virginia council, he was supplied with £1200 in paper currency.<sup>10</sup> After his plans began to be crowned with success he obtained various sums from well-disposed citizens who advanced money to him on the credit of the state of Virginia, but his treasury was usually low.

Hard money was almost entirely lacking,<sup>11</sup> and the common medium of exchange was Virginia currency. Not only was this a depreciated form of money but its scale of depreciation fluctuated so continually that its use was a never-ending source of

<sup>9</sup> A statement by Clark of articles delivered to Potawatomi Indians "when in council with me" includes "3 qts. taffia, 2 gals. ditto, 6 qts. ditto, 1 lb. vermilion, 7 lbs. tobacco, 10 yds. tape, 2 yds. linen, 1 yd. blue ribbon," and numerous other articles. Moses Henry, Indian agent for Clark, issued orders from time to time upon the commissary for supplies. *Ibid.*, "Aud. 53." (Many details regarding supplies to Indians are found in these records.)

<sup>10</sup> Clark's "Memoir," in *Clark's papers* (James, ed.), 219. The original is in the Draper manuscripts.

<sup>11</sup> For an account of the scarcity of hard money in Virginia, see Ripley, *Financial history of Virginia*, 108 ff.

vexation. At Kaskaskia in June, 1779, the ratio between silver dollars and Virginia paper stood at about one to six, though at Vincennes and Cahokia widely different rates prevailed. By November the ratio at Kaskaskia had declined to a scale of one to thirty while in 1781 the rate on money newly issued in Virginia appears to have been about one to forty.<sup>12</sup> The low credit of the state produced great irritation on the part of the inhabitants in the Illinois country, who complained loudly of the cheap paper in which they were paid; and at times it was necessary to conduct transactions on the basis of barter. County Lieutenant Todd, for instance, at one time accumulated a large supply of peltries to be used in paying for provisions.<sup>13</sup>

It may be said that Clark's three principal methods of paying for supplies were: (1) in Virginia paper currency; (2) in drafts upon the state of Virginia; and (3) in drafts upon Pollock, the commercial agent at New Orleans, of whom more will be said later. The financial and other support furnished by the continental congress was of relatively slight importance.<sup>14</sup>

Clark's commissary department seems to have been fairly well organized with an efficient man, William Shannon, in charge as commissary general. An approved form of commissary routine was observed.<sup>15</sup> Contracts were made with responsible

<sup>12</sup> Clark was able to keep the Virginia paper currency in circulation at a higher ratio than that prevailing at home. In 1781 new notes were issued by Virginia with the understanding that they were to be redeemed in Spanish milled dollars at the rate of one to forty. By 1782 the ratio fell as low as one to one hundred William W. Hening, *The statutes-at-large, being a collection of all the laws of Virginia (1619-1792)* (Philadelphia and New York, 1823), 10: 399.

<sup>13</sup> Peltries served as a sort of currency in the Illinois country at this time. Their use to provide the army with provisions is referred to in a letter of Jonathan Clark to his brother George Rogers Clark, December 12, 1791. Clark manuscripts (Draper manuscripts, J), 53: 91. Much evidence covering this subject is to be found in the Clark papers in the Virginia state archives, "Aud. 73." See also *Clark papers* (James, ed.), 328.

<sup>14</sup> Clark occasionally refers to supplies issued from the "continental stores." Describing the very outset of his first expedition in his "Memoir" he says: "taking in my stores at Pittsburgh and weling I proceeded Down the River." Referring to the same time in the Mason letter he writes: "I set out from RedStone the 12th of May [1778] . . . General Hand . . . furnished me with every necessary I wanted." *Ibid.*, 220, 117. Washington, writing to the board of war, April 20, 1781, mentioned certain military stores at Fort Pitt which Clark was to use in his attack upon Detroit. *Ibid.*, 535.

<sup>15</sup> Abuses in Clark's commissary department (in which Clark himself was blameless) are hinted at in the communications sent to Clark from the Virginia war



parties for the furnishing of specified provisions, and supply bases, as for instance at the falls of the Ohio, were established for the accumulation of stores. Receipts were taken for moneys paid; supplies were duly acknowledged; properly authorized officers presented orders on the commissary or quartermaster countersigned by Clark when they needed supplies; provision returns were kept for each company; and, for the smallest article, an issuing voucher was made out.

Though seemingly the driest of documents, these vouchers and other routine orders possess a certain human interest, and with the exercise of some imagination they may sometimes be made to tell quite a story. The following examples are sufficient to suggest the character of these routine documents: Issue such and such provisions to the bearer (an Indian) "for services done in relieving a prisoner taken on the Cherokee river;" "Received of Major George Slaughter \$1290 for the use of my pack horses for eight days to carry his men's baggage over the Alleghany Mountains;" "Issue to that squaw who furnished our men with provisions on our way to attack Governor Hamilton one bushel of corn and five pounds of pork;" "Received of William Harrison \$540 for 12 days' work at boating flour from Georges Creek to Pittsburg;" "Issue 93 gallons of taffia to that number of men at this garrison [Fort Jefferson];" "Please pay to Mr. A. Birch 4000 livres for one horse, bridle and saddle bought of him for use of United States at Kaskaskia."<sup>16</sup> There are thousands of these papers, and while such trivial things would usually be passed over, yet the unrecorded acts which some of these orders and vouchers suggest cannot fail to arouse the historian's curiosity.

In the search for supplies the most obvious recourse was to the local inhabitants. At times this means of supply proved fruitful as in the case of the people of Cahokia in the summer of 1779, whom Bowman enthusiastically praised for generously supplying him with a fifth of their cattle and horses.<sup>17</sup> While office in Richmond in the spring of 1782. Clark is enjoined to issue pointed instructions to restrain his subordinate officers, widely scattered at various posts. He is asked to insist that nothing be drawn from the stores except what is absolutely necessary, and that a very strict accounting be kept. Clark manuscripts (Draper manuscripts, J), 53: 12 ff.

<sup>16</sup> Clark papers, in Virginia state archives, *passim*.

<sup>17</sup> *Clark papers* (James, ed.), 327.

at Kaskaskia in 1778, Clark was largely dependent upon the French inhabitants for supplies. In this matter he was ably assisted by the Spanish merchant, Francis Vigo, who furnished large supplies out of his own stores, and who also advanced money to the local inhabitants for the goods which they furnished to the troops. Without Vigo's ready cash, it is doubtful whether the inhabitants would willingly have parted with their provisions.<sup>18</sup> The papers of Clark and his commissary officers include a long list of individuals who were paid for furnishing goods for his use. At times, however, the temper of the inhabitants was sullen, and they refused the most urgent applications, so that the soldiers were pinched with hunger in a fairly prosperous country. The inhabitants had, it is true, their grievances, as for instance when their cattle were seized, or when the bills in which they were paid proved to be irredeemable; and their resentment was intensified by the adverse influence of various disaffected and disloyal characters. Besides, the supplies which they were capable of furnishing were necessarily limited.

Other sources therefore had to be developed, and far-reaching lines of supply transportation had to be created. A considerable portion of all of Clark's supplies came from New Orleans by way of the Mississippi. Through the never-tiring efforts of the American and Virginian agent at New Orleans, boats were kept plying, often under Spanish colors, for the Illinois country. The presence of the British sloops of war on the river, the menacing guns of the British at Natchez, the danger of Indian attack, and the perils of up-stream navigation made this method of communication very hazardous. Sometimes the Mississippi overflowed, and valuable provisions were lost. Once a batteau of supplies had to be stopped after its departure up the river on account of a Tory plot to capture the cargo. Only the most resolute men were chosen to man the north-bound boats. Such men were scarce, and their wages high. Yet rather than discharge sailors and batteau men, the American agent retained them on pay during periods of idleness, although this proved to be an expensive process.<sup>19</sup>

In these important operations *via* the Mississippi, as well as

<sup>18</sup> Report regarding Vigo's claim, *House reports*, 30 congress, 1 session, no. 216.

<sup>19</sup> Oliver Pollock to the commercial committee of the continental congress, May 20, 1778. Letters and papers of Oliver Pollock, in the Library of congress, volume 1.

in general administrative matters, there is one man who stands out as Clark's main support. This man was Oliver Pollock, a wealthy merchant of New Orleans, who served Clark in much the same way that Robert Morris, the financier of the revolution, served Washington.<sup>20</sup> Having lived for a time at Havana and having become later associated with the Spanish governor of Louisiana, and being in addition an able business man and a patriot of unusual devotion, he was well qualified for the difficult position which he held at New Orleans during the revolution. Pollock acted in a double capacity. He was at the same time agent of the state of Virginia, and commercial agent of the United States at New Orleans, which was then a Spanish port. An extensive correspondence was conducted between Pollock and the commercial committee of the continental congress, of which Robert Morris was the leading member. Pollock was instructed to supply all possible assistance to Clark's expedition, to purchase goods on the best terms, to charter vessels or buy them if necessary, to employ the crews, to be responsible for the safe arrival of cargoes, and to see that the goods were paid for. He was directed to keep his accounts for the goods furnished to Clark separate from his other transactions, and to charge all the advances for the "Illinois department" to the state of Virginia. At the very outset of his first expedition Clark was indebted to Pollock, who had sent to Pittsburg the goods which General Hand supplied out of the continental stores.<sup>21</sup> In the following months his ammunition came in large part from Pollock, and the same may be said of clothing, sugar, liquor, and many other articles.

Pollock at New Orleans was thus the "good angel" of the

<sup>20</sup> The writer's chief sources for Pollock are: *Clark papers* (James, ed.); Clark manuscripts, in the Virginia state archives; Letters and papers of Oliver Pollock, in the Papers of the continental congress, Library of congress; Rev. Horace E. Hayden, *A biographical sketch of Oliver Pollock, esq., of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, United States commercial agent at New Orleans and Havana, 1776-1784, with genealogical notes of his descendants* (Harrisburgh, Pennsylvania, 1883); *House reports*, 30 congress, 1 session, no. 216; Report of the commissioner of revolutionary claims, *Journal of the house of delegates of Virginia*, 1835-1836, appendix, document no. 6.

<sup>21</sup> "When in 1778, General George Rogers Clarke [*sic*] was dispatched . . . with a small force to reduce the English posts at Vincennes and Kaskaskia, Pollock had already forwarded to Fort Pitt by Colonel Gibson, a large quantity of gunpowder obtained from the King's stores, part of which furnished Clarke with his ammunition." Hayden, *Pollock genealogy*, 10. (See *ante*, n. 14).

Clark campaigns. Not only did he furnish a service of essential supplies by way of the Mississippi and the Ohio, but he contributed what was equally important — namely, credit. Clark's remittances for articles obtained in his vicinity frequently took the form of drafts upon Pollock. It was in this way that he paid the ordinary bills of his commissary department. Clark looked up to Pollock in somewhat the same way that the continental congress looked to Franklin, as a sort of financial wizard — one whose name on a bill of exchange was almost the same as money itself. In this piling-up of paper obligations the war financiers of the period often forgot that if paper obligations are not ultimately redeemed in hard money, the only alternative is repudiation.

Not only did Clark continually issue drafts upon Pollock in large sums, but many of his officers assumed the same privilege. A curious bit of backwoods finance is found in the action of Captain Robert George in command at Fort Jefferson in 1781. Because of the dire need of his troops, he drew bills of exchange upon Pollock for \$237,320 in order to pay for a cargo of liquor and dry goods. He admitted that he was "taking a liberty" in so doing; that he intended the bills to be paid in current money, not specie; that in spite of this the bills expressly directed payment to be made in gold and silver; that he was "unacquainted with the nature of bills of exchange;" that he later recognized that he had been imposed upon, and that he was glad finally to learn that the bills had been protested, since it was never his intention to have drawn for so enormous a sum to be paid in specie.<sup>22</sup>

It should be noted that Clark's bills on Pollock were for hard money. "All bills which were drawn by me on New Orleans," he said, "were passed at the rate of a hard dollar for every one named in the bill." Those drawn on Virginia, he added, were for depreciated paper dollars. This statement of Clark's is corroborated by other evidence which shows that the bills drawn by the Virginia officers in the Illinois country upon Pollock were paid for at par in specie.

One naturally asks, how did Pollock meet all these obliga-

<sup>22</sup> *Journal of the house of delegates of Virginia, 1835-1836, appendix, document no. 6.*

tions? The answer is: Theoretically, by advances upon the state of Virginia; practically, out of his own pocket. The status of Virginia's credit in Louisiana in 1779 is illustrated by the fact that when a Mr. Lindsay appeared in New Orleans in 1779 with a bill of credit for \$10,000 supplied by Governor Patrick Henry with which to procure supplies for Clark, none of the merchants of the place could be prevailed upon to supply the goods on such a basis. Again, Pollock drew upon Virginia's account with a firm of French financiers only to find that these bills to the extent of \$65,000 came back under protest. Pollock once remarked as to his relations with Virginia that he was "an agent indeed but that was all." In August, 1779, he wrote to County Lieutenant Todd, "I have never yet been honored with a line from the executive power of the state of Virginia," and in March, 1780, he stated that since the commencement of the war he had received no communications from the Virginian council.

Disappointed in his expectation of funds from the Virginia treasury, and constantly pressed to supply Clark's emergency demands, Pollock drew upon his own private resources. He did not stop until he had exhausted his fortune. Realizing, as he says, that the posts in the Illinois country would inevitably fall without his support, he borrowed money in his own name, mortgaged his property, and sold his slaves far under their value in order to obtain funds. He even paid batteau men and traders silver in exchange for paper currency, dollar for dollar, in order to encourage the traders to carry up their goods and at the same time to keep up the credit of the paper. His total advances to Virginia and the United States exceeded \$300,000, for all of which his own credit was pledged.

The time came when Pollock could do no more. In February, 1779, he wrote, "How Colonel Clark and the state of Virginia expect such heavy sums to be paid by me without money is a mystery which time only can point out." It soon became necessary for Pollock to protest Clark's bills, and this bitter news, indicating the failure of Clark's most trusted source of credit, proved a grievous disappointment to him.

Pollock's generosity spelt his own ruin. His creditors closed in upon him, and in 1783 he was imprisoned by the Spanish

authorities at Havana for debt, being detained in custody for eighteen months. His account with Virginia was ultimately assumed by the United States, and in 1782 Alexander Hamilton handed him a treasury warrant for \$108,605.<sup>23</sup> This was, however, only a partial settlement.

The supplies furnished to Clark gave rise to many post-war claims, and in order to adjudicate them the Virginia government appointed a board of "western commissioners." The work of this body, however, was unsatisfactory. Its rules of evidence were strict, its place of meeting shifted frequently, and many of the claimants either did not know about the board or felt that the uncertain result would not justify the costly effort of prosecuting a claim before it. As a part of the settlement with the United States arising out of the Northwest cession, Virginia was paid the lump sum of \$500,000 to cover the expenses of acquiring the western territory. It was understood that disbursements would be made from this sum for the satisfaction of the individual claimants, and the "commissioner of revolutionary claims for the state of Virginia" inherited from the "western commissioners" the duty of making the necessary adjustments.<sup>24</sup>

By this time Clark had made his accounting to the state, and his financial records were given over to the auditor for safe-keeping. It appears that many of the ledgers and books of account in the auditor's office were destroyed, and some of the Clark papers may have suffered in this way. Such as remained lay in confused heaps in the Virginia state capitol, until recently the state archivist acquired them. Now they are flat-filed and suitably arranged for historical study.<sup>25</sup>

Claims arising out of Clark's operations have at times been presented to the federal government. Oliver Pollock was allowed the expense of his confinement at Havana, in addition to the

<sup>23</sup> Hayden, *Pollock genealogy*, 15.

<sup>24</sup> Typical reports on claims connected with Clark's expeditions are to be found in *House reports*, 30 congress, 1 session, no. 216, and *Journal of the house of delegates of Virginia*, 1835-1836, appendix, document no. 6. Complete references to such material in Virginia state publications are to be found in Earl G. Swem, *A bibliography of Virginia* (Richmond, 1916-1917), part 2.

<sup>25</sup> See *ante*, n. 5. These records will appear in Professor James's additional volume of Clark papers, to be published in the *Illinois historical collections*.

\$108,000 previously mentioned, and Francis Vigo was reimbursed by the United States for various claims.

The historian of today who seeks to estimate Clark's place in history will profit by an intimate study of his daily administrative problems. It is only by visualizing the magnitude of his tasks in comparison with the inadequacy of the means at his disposal that one can measure the personality of the man Clark, — the man to whom the middle west owes its existence as an American community.

JAMES G. RANDALL

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
URBANA